Gal 9 Lc. h 15 A. 2.

732. i 15.

TO

THE REVEREND

DOCTOR RANDOLPH,

VICECHANCELLOR

OF THE UNIVERSITY OF

O X F O R D.

REVEREND SIR,

YOUR eminent ſtation in this place, and the character you have deſervedly maintained of integrity, learning, and public ſpirit, have determined me to apply myſelf to you, with regard to a complaint of no ſmall importance, which I find myſelf under the diſagreeable neceſſity of making. And as the object of this complaint is a truſt, wherein the honour and intereſt of the whole univerſity ſeem to me to be deeply concerned, I ſhall make no apology for laying the ſame before the members of convocation alſo; ſince their advice and concurrence will be requiſite, to miniſter effectual redreſs.

It is now almoſt two years ago, ſince I had the unexpected honour to be nominated a delegate for printing; an employment by no means to be coveted in the moſt flouriſhing ſtate of the preſs, but much leſs ſo at a period of time when it was notoriouſly reduced to a very deplorable condition. I thought myſelf however obliged to the gentlemen concerned in the nomination, for this mark of their confidence and good opinion, and therefore accepted the truſt; little dreaming of the difficulties it has ſince been my lot to encounter.

When I came to conſider the weight and extent of the charge, thus ſuddenly caſt upon me, I perceived myſelf bound, both in point of reputation and duty, to learn in ſome little degree the nature of the buſineſs I had undertaken: for without a competent knowledge of the conſtitution of the preſs in general, and the univerſity preſs in particular, I preſumed it would be impoſſible to underſtand the cauſes of its preſent decline, ſo as to prepare the way for a ſpeedy and laſting reſtorative. I ſaw that the credit of the place was intimately connected with this enquiry: that all ſeminaries of learning had made it their particular care to raiſe and ſupport the character of their learned preſs; being ſenſible that it was principally from this outward fruit, that poſterity or foreign nations could judge of their internal merit: that other leſs reſpectable univerſities, even in our own iſland, were daily extending their fame by this and by ſimilar methods: while the *Oxford* preſs, which was once the foremoſt in this laudable contention, was languiſhing in a lazy obſcurity, and barely reminding us of it's exiſtence, by now and then ſlowly bringing forth a programma, a ſermon printed by requeſt, or at beſt a *Bodleian* catalogue. Individuals, it is true, had at times, very nobly

contributed their quota, by learned and elegant publications, to reſcue its name from contempt: but the univerſity in its *collective* capacity, which ſat idle, got little reputation by the contraſt. And this was the more aſtoniſhing, as we were in poſſeſſion of the moſt ample privileges, by the favour of our kings and legiſlature; were endowed with a princely revenue, appropriated to the uſe of the preſs; and never had at any one time more gentlemen of learning, of various and extended learning, than of late had adorned the univerſity.

To inveſtigate therefore the true cauſes of this misfortune, I had recourſe to a diligent peruſal of our charters, ſtatutes, and regiſters, relating to the preſs; (ſo far as I was *permitted* to peruſe them;) and had repeated conferences with the moſt eminent maſters, in *London* and other places, with regard to the mechanical part of printing; and then endeavoured to compare what I had thus learned with what was put in practice at *Oxford*. The reſult of this compariſon, between what ought to be, and what is performed, will form the ſubject of the enſuing pages; wherein I ſhall endeavour to lay before you, impartially, freely, and without reſerve, what I take to be the immediate cauſes of the preſent condition of our preſs.

And herein, ſir, I am ſenſible that ſome diſagreeable truths muſt be brought into open light, which may poſſibly chagrin a few gentlemen, for whoſe many good qualities in other ſituations of life, I have a juſt and ſincere reſpect; and for whoſe ſakes, as well as my own, it had been much more eligible, could this taſk of reformation have been carried on among ourſelves, with privacy, concord, and diſpatch. But the experience of near two years has convinced me, that this is rather to be wiſhed than expected; all propoſals of amendment having hitherto been treated with ſupercilious neglect, or at beſt with a languid indifference. It gives me however a very ſenſible pleaſure, that you, ſir, have been totally unconcerned in theſe tranſactions; not having been yet called to the burthen of either the delegacy of the preſs, or of accounts, much leſs to the accumulated weight of both; ſo that nothing contained in theſe ſheets can be conſtrued to convey a reflection on your juſtly diſtinguiſhed character. And, in this ſituation, I am perſuaded that your prudence will not haſtily engage you to adopt the miſtakes of others; nor your integrity ſuffer you to encourage the continuance of meaſures, which have only been excuſable from inadvertence, but may require a harſher conſtruction, if wilfully purſued and avowed.

I. The firſt cauſe of our preſent inactivity, that I ſhall mention, is the want of a regular *time* and *place* for the meeting of the delegates to deliberate

berate on buſineſs. This omiſſion, however ſlight it may appear, is the parent of much uncertainty and delay. When a ſtated time and place are prefixed for the meeting, the delegates will ſo order their private avocations, that they may be able to attend conſtantly upon their public duty. And a regulation of this kind is always to be found, in every other aſſembly ſelected for the diſpatch of buſineſs; by daily, weekly, or monthly aſſemblies at a certain place, or by adjournments made among themſelves, as particular exigencies may require. Whereas, when ſummoned at all, we are now ſummoned together at a few hours notice, and frequently in private lodgings. And ſometimes it happens that the magiſtrate who directs the ſummons, not being reſtrained to any regular time, puts off the intended meeting from day to day, till the buſineſs either entirely drops, or ſuffers conſiderably by delay. Thus, to inſtance in a recent tranſaction, biſhop *Gibſon* died in the year 1748; and his executor ſoon after offered to the univerſity, purſuant to the biſhop's intentions, his corrected copy of the *Codex*; but no final agreement was made with him till *february*, 1756; and no ſteps were taken to carry that agreement into execution, and forward the work to the preſs, till *october* following.

I am very well aware that the appointment of both *place* and *time* is now left in the breaſt of the vicechancellor only; and perhaps, ſir, you may hear ſome ſuggeſtions, that it would be too dangerous a condeſcenſion, to part with ſo important a prerogative. But let it be conſidered, that there was formerly no public place ſet apart and prepared for the reception of *all* delegates, as the delegates' room at the printing houſe at preſent is: and the peculiar propriety of *our* meeting there, for conducting the buſineſs of the preſs, is too obvious to need explanation. Nor is it deſired, to preclude the vicechancellor from calling a meeting at *any time*, as ſudden emergencies may require; but only to inſure a conſtant and regular meeting at *ſome time or other*. And I think I may be confident that *you*, ſir, will never inſiſt upon a prerogative, attended with ſo much inconvenience to the public buſineſs, which cannot be uſed to any laudable purpoſe, and may be perverted to many bad ones. It is under a good and gentle adminiſtration that we hope for ſuch ſalutary proviſions, as may reſtrain the power of doing hurt in thoſe of a different ſtamp; and I own I am the more ſolicitous for a reſtriction, which ſeems at firſt view of no mighty importance, becauſe I have ſeen the latitude at preſent given made a very extraordinary uſe of: I have known a meeting, either ſuddenly precipitated to carry a favourite point, like the memorable ſcheme for the almanacs; or deferred without end, to ſtave

off

off a diſagreeable meaſure, like that of appointing an overſeer; (both which I ſhall preſently explain;) or ſecretly aſſembled in a private conclave, to elude the claim of a delegate, whom his brethren had reſolved to reject. Nay, I have known this diſcretionary prerogative ſtretched to ſuch a wantonneſs of power, as to inſert or leave out of the ſummons, whomever the magiſtrate thought fit: I have known a bedel ſent [a] to an unqueſtioned delegate, at ten o'clock at night, with this ſingular meſſage in writing, that " if he pleaſed to attend (the next morning) as a *ſtated* " delegate of the preſs, he was included in the ſummons; if not, his " attendance was not required:" as a ſupplement alſo to which, I cannot eaſily forget that this delegate, at the next public meeting, in a few days after, was openly charged with perjury for non-attendance upon the former notice, by the very perſon who wrote the ſummons.

II. Another cauſe of our diſſipation and uncertainty in matters of buſineſs is the want of a proper and diſtinct *regiſter*, wherein the acts of the delegacy might be entered and properly authenticated. This was adviſed by archbiſhop LAUD at the firſt eſtabliſhment of the delegacy, viz. " that ſome handſome regiſterbook were bought, in which might be " kept alone your acts concerning the ſettlement of the preſs [b]." And I have reaſon to believe it was then complied with; for I remember to have ſeen in your predeceſſor's hands a book, out of which he read an old order of the delegates, to prove ſome particular point; but when I deſired he would favour me with the peruſal of the whole at leiſure, he begged to be excuſed: and as I am informed by you, ſir, that ſuch a book never came to your knowledge, I preſume that this regiſter, like others, " is ſo miſlaid that he knows not where to have recourſe to it." At preſent, it is true, the regiſtrar ſometimes attends us, and takes looſe minutes of what is agreed on, for immediate uſe; but as this is not properly his duty, and as no laſting entry is made of any thing, we are as much, nay more, at a loſs to know what paſſed a year ago, than what was done at the ſettlement of the preſs. I need not enlarge upon the inconvenience of this ſtrange omiſſion.

III. It would alſo be extremely conducive to our knowledge of the buſineſs before us, if, as delegates of the preſs, we were permitted to *audit* and *examine* the *accounts* of the workmen we employ. It ſeems to common underſtandings an abſurdity to debar us of this right; to give us a power of laying out money for the preſs, and no power of ſeeing whether that money has been properly applied as directed. But, as the

[a] 13 Jul. 1756.

[b] Hiſt. of his Chancellorſhip. 126.

caſe

caſe now ſtands, the delegates of accounts have taken this office upon them, in excluſion of thoſe of the preſs; notwithſtanding the decree of convocation, 31 *mar.* 1637, expreſly directs, that the delegates of the preſs, " *delegati antehac nominati*, 1 apr. 1633, *quotannis rationem* " *redderent huic domui de receptis & expenſis, in hunc uſum erogatis*; & " *ſuper hoc negotio* LIBRUM RATIOCINII *ſervarent.*"——A certain writer indeed has not ſcrupled to aſſert (page xviii. of his performance) that " it has been the immemorial practice to have the accounts of the preſs " audited and ſettled by the *proper* delegates (he muſt mean, thoſe for " printing;) and then for ſome of thoſe delegates, who were alſo dele- " gates of accounts, to ſee the balance already ſtated made a part of the " vicechancellor's general account." But the proctors have reminded him, that the fact was totally the reverſe, the *only* time that the preſs accounts were ſettled during his adminiſtration: and I muſt alſo add to their teſtimony my own experience, that in *december*, 1755, Dr. *Walker* (a mere delegate of accounts) was called in to ſettle the accounts of the preſs; and neither myſelf, nor either of the proctors, were permitted to inſpect the book; but were diſmiſſed the room, before Mr. *Wood* was ſuffered to begin his account.

IV. It ſeems alſo highly expedient that we ſhould have *copies* of our charters for printing, of the univerſity-leaſe to *Baſkett*, and of all acts of parliament, &c. relating to the privileges of our preſs, always ready for the delegates to conſult upon occaſion; who would thereby be the better *informed* of the limits and extent of their powers. For want of this knowledge, about two years ago, an agreement was actually drawn with regard to the *Codex*, to have paſſed under the public ſeal, by which we were to have given up our privileges to Mr. *Lintot* the law-printer, to have purchaſed his conſent at a very high price, and to have inſerted in the title of the book that it was printed by his permiſſion; but that luckily a perſon, who was conſulted about the *form* of the agreement, ſtarted an objection to the *matter*.——So too at a meeting, 14 *july*, 1756 [c], it was thought proper to impower two *London* bookſellers to print at the *Clarendon* preſs the fourpenny ſheet almanack, together with *Rider*'s britiſh *Merlin*, poor *Robin*, and other vulgar almanacs; and an inſtrument was actually ingroſſing for that purpoſe; but a ſufficient number not being preſent to conſtitute a regular meeting, the confirmation of this bargain was luckily deferred till another day; when one of the delegates, who refuſed to be excluded a ſecond time, gave it a ſtrong oppoſition on account of the

[c] See the laſt page.

diſcredit

diſcredit ſo mean an employment would bring upon the *Oxford* preſs. And he was ſo well ſeconded by others who were not before preſent, that the further conſideration of this ſcheme was put off *ſine die*; and it was afterwards found (as was then ſuggeſted) that we were happily precluded, by our leaſe to *Baſkett*, from making any ſuch agreement at all. —Again; by a ſtatute of queen ANNE, all books printed at the univerſity preſs, in any learned language, are allowed a drawback at the treaſury for the duty paid upon the paper. Yet ſo little has this been attended to, that when Mr. *Lye* ſome years ago printed his edition of *Junius* here, and made his application for the drawback, I have heard that he met with great trouble upon that account, the demand being entirely new and unprecedented. Whereas if the claim of this privilege were put into a certain method, and were conſtantly and regularly inſiſted on, it would ſoon become a matter of courſe in the public offices, and be allowed with as little heſitation as the bounty for exporting of corn.

V. Another cauſe of the decline of our preſs, more important than any I have mentioned, is the want of an induſtrious, honeſt, and ſkilful *overſeer*, to inſpect and manage the mechanical part of printing; with which the delegates themſelves, from the nature of their reſpective ſtudies, cannot be ſuppoſed to be accurately and minutely acquainted.

The univerſity ſtatutes direct [d], that over the public univerſity preſs an architypographer, properly qualified, be appointed; to overlook (as I underſtand his office) the impreſſion of all ſuch books as are printed by the univerſity itſelf, from it's *public* fund. And to this office the ſuperior bedel of law's place is for the future directed to be annexed. In purſuance of which, 24 *july*, 1649, at a meeting of the public delegates for the total adminiſtration of affairs in thoſe times of confuſion, " *magiſter* Samuel Clarke *e collegio* Mertonenſi, *vir graecis latiniſque* " *literis probe inſtructus, et in ſtudiis philologicis verſatiſſimus, architypo-*

[d] *Tit.* xviii. *Sect.* 5. *Quoniam in re typographica uſu compertum eſt mechanicos artifices (lucri ſui compendium cum diſpendio operis plerumque ſectantes) calligraphiae ſeu operis decori & elegantiae minime ſtudere, ſed opera quaeque rudia ac inemendata in publicam lucem extrudere; idcirco praeſenti ſtatuto cautum eſto, quod publicae univerſitatis typographiae inſtruendae, in domo aliqua huic uſui ſpecialiter deputata, praeficiatur architypographus unus; vir graecis latiniſque literis probe inſtructus, & in ſtudiis philologicis verſatiſſimus. Cujus munus erit, operis typographicis ibidem praeeſſe, materiam ſive ſupellectilem typographicam (chartam ſcilicet, prœla, typos, & alia hujus opificii inſtrumenta) ut ſint in ſuo quaeque genere lectiſſima, providere. In operibus e* publica *univerſitatis typographia prodeuntibus, typorum modulum, chartae qualitatem, marginum menſuram praeſcribere; correctorum errata emendare; et alia quaecunque ad operis ornatum & perfectionem ſpectantia ſedulo curare. Cui muneri quo alacrius & liberius vacet (praeter certam portionem lucri e libris impreſſis provenientis, ipſi poſthac pro ratione ſymbolae, quam ad publicae typographiae peculium ſeu ſortem communem contulerit, aſſignandam ab iis qui a domo convocationis ad ordinanda ſtatuta typographica delegandi erunt) officium ſuperioris bedelli in jure civili, (utpote reliquis minus negotioſum) quandocunque primum quoquo modo vacaverit, perpetuo in poſterum annectendum fore, praeſenti ſtatuto cautum eſto.*

" *graphus*

" *graphus nominabatur, juxta ſtat. tit.* 18. *ſect.* 5. *Cui muneri ut liberius*
" *vacet, officium ſuperioris bedelli in jure civili, quandocunque primum*
" *quoquo modo vacaverit, deſignatur.*" And, upon the next vacancy in the bedell's place by the death of *Bernard Hore*, *Clarke* was on the 14th of *may*, 1658, elected by the convocation architypographer, and on the 29th of *may* following was admitted bedell of law. And, however illegal the authority by which he was appointed, he continued to exerciſe both offices without any re-election till his death in 1669; when the convocation, on the 29th of *december*, unfortunately made choice of one *Norton Bold* to ſucceed him as architypographer, " *cui muneri*," ſays the regiſter, " *officium bedelli ſuperioris in jure civili annectitur.*" But this man being utterly unqualified for the place, it gave occaſion to a letter from king CHARLES the ſecond to the univerſity, in the following remarkable terms:

" To our truſty and well-beloved our vicechancellor of our univerſity
" of *Oxford*; and in his abſence to the provicechancellor for the
" time being; to be communicated to the heads of houſes, and
" to our convocation.

" CHARLES R.

" TRUSTY and well-beloved, we greet you well. Whereas the
" king our father of moſt bleſſed memory hath by his charters
" and gracious conceſſions added much to the antient rights and privi-
" leges of that our univerſity in the affair of printing, and hath alſo, in
" that body of ſtatutes which he gave you, moſt eſpecially provided that
" the office of architypographer, or overſeer of your printing preſſes,
" ſhould have the office of ſuperior bedell in the law faculty annext unto
" it; and that the perſon choſen thereto ſhould be qualified for ſkill and
" experience ſuitable to ſuch a truſt and employment: and whereas we
" are informed that, at the laſt vacancie of the ſuperior law bedell's place,
" there was not that regard had to the ſtatute and deſign of our dear
" father, as the weight and conſequence of the thing required; which
" we are willing to believe was the effect of overmuch haſt and inad-
" vertency, rather than any neglect of ſo uſeful an inſtitution: We being
" now advertiſed by our right truſty and right entirely beloved couſin
" and councellor the duke of *Ormond*, our chancellor of that our univerſity,
" of an opportunity by transferring the perſon lately choſen ſuperior law
" bedell into the like place of bedell in either of the other faculties that
" ſhall firſt become voyd, doe hereby declare our approbation of that ex-

 pedient;

" pedient; and further doe will and require that, upon the vacancie of the " law bedle's place by ſuch transference, you do proceed to the election " of an architypographer according to your ſtatutes; wherein we doe both " recommend and expect that you chooſe the moſt capable perſon that " you can find, to overſee and governe your printing preſſes with beſt ad- " vantage to the publick; and that you chooſe noe other but ſuch who, " beſides the abilities requiſite in the tongues, you know to be moſt ex- " perienced in the mechanick part of printing, according to the ſtatute and " deſigne of our dear father in that behalfe. For we cannot but be very " much concerned that, ſince you have thoſe conveniences for a great " imprimerie which other univerſitys cannot boaſt of, your improvement " and productions in that kind be anſwearable to the preſent opportuni- " ties and antient honor of that our univerſity. And ſo we bid you heartily " farewell. Given at our court at *Whitehall* the 17th of *ſeptember* in the " 23 year of our raigne, 1671.

" By his majeſtie's command,

" ARLINGTON."

In conſequence of this letter (which contains good matter of reflection for ſucceeding times) *Bold* was, on the 10th of *octobe*r following, transferred to the place of divinity bedell; and *Chriſtopher Waſe* was elected architypographer, " *cui muneri*," ſays the regiſter again, " *ſecundum ſtatuta* " *annectitur officium ſuperioris bedelli in jure civili*." In like manner *Gerard Langbane*, 16 *jan.* 1690; *Giles Thiſtlethwayte*, 28 *jun.* 1692; *Thomas Hearne*, 19 *jan.* 1714; and *William Muſſendine*, 12 *aug.* 1715; were elected architypographers, and not bedells; the bedell's place being expreſsly declared in the regiſters to be annexed to the other office. The laſt mentioned gentleman, I have been informed, was at leaſt as unfit for the office as *Norton Bold*; but inſtead of removing him into another faculty, according to that example, he was ſuffered to execute his office by deputy: one *Richardſon*, a working printer, and warehouſekeeper to the delegates, being thenceforth entruſted with the total management of the houſe.

This warehouſekeeper, or mechanical overſeer, I apprehend to be a very diſtinct officer from the former, or architypographer; who is the ſervant of the *univerſity*, and whoſe office is to correct, and preſcribe the ſize, the letter, &c, of ſuch works as are undertaken at the *public* charge. This would be abſurd and impracticable in works that are printed for *private* perſons; though therein alſo, for the credit of the houſe, he has a general

a general overſight, and ſhould be careful that all the apparatus for printing be the beſt in it's ſeveral kinds. But the warehouſekeeper, manager, or foreman, who is the ſervant of the *delegates*, is not only to diſpoſe and arrange the univerſity books in the drying rooms and warehouſe, when printed; but alſo to provide ink, and other materials; to inſpect and prevent abuſes among the other workmen; to aſſign a due proportion of wages to the compoſitors and preſsmen, according to the value of their work; and to agree upon reaſonable terms with authors or bookſellers, for printing any private pieces, when the public preſs is at leiſure.

But *Richardſon*, for the reaſons before mentioned, having long acted in both theſe capacities, Mr. *Muſſendine*'s typographical character was entirely forgot in the univerſity; he was regarded as a mere bedell of law; and when on his death, Mr. *Herbert Beaver* was, 30 *oct.* 1732, elected bedell in his room, the place of architypographer was then left vacant, and ſo continues to the preſent time.

What *Richardſon*'s abilities might formerly be, I know not. When I firſt became acquainted with the houſe, he was totally ſuperannuated, and entirely unfit for buſineſs. In a long courſe of years he had however peopled the houſe with a numerous train of deſcendants; ſons, grandſons, ſons-in-law, &c: who only, for the moſt part, are ſtill ſuffered to be there employed; and indeed they care not to undertake more work, than can be conveniently and leiſurely performed by their own family. To one of theſe, whoſe name is *Wood*, by profeſſion a preſsman, and entirely ignorant of the compoſitor's buſineſs, (but his own ſon-in-law) *Richardſon* had conſigned the care of the houſe; and to theſe two men, this deputy and under-deputy, thus qualified and thus connected, acting without check or controll, for the benefit of themſelves and their kinſmen, has the total management of the preſs, and with it the honour of the univerſity, been entruſted; till by degrees, in a courſe of about forty years, it has ſunk to it's preſent condition.

It was in this branch of management that a reformation (if any was ever intended) was neceſſarily firſt to begin. It was therefore, ſo long ago as *february* 1756, propoſed by the compiler of theſe papers to the then vicechancellor and delegates, to appoint ſome honeſt, induſtrious, and ſkilful manager, and to allow old *Richardſon* a competent ſalary for his life; in caſe a regard for his paſt ſervices ſhould forbid us to think of his total diſcharge. But the latter part of the propoſal ſoon became unneceſſary, by *Richardſon*'s death very early in the following ſpring. His ſon-in-law immediately became a candidate to ſucceed him, and met (as he aſſured me) with encouragement from moſt of the delegates.

For my own part, though very willing to continue *Wood* in his proper employment of a preſsman, yet I thought he had ſhewn no talents for the total management of the printing-houſe; and was not a little pleaſed at an opportunity, that ſo luckily offered, to put the mechanical branch of the preſs under ſome able artiſt, without any real or apparent hardſhip to any one. But diſcourſing with your predeceſſor to this purpoſe, I had ſoon the mortification to find, that *Wood* had given me a very juſt account; and that a ſtrong inclination (if not a reſolution) had prevailed among many of the delegates, to commit to his hands the entire management of the houſe; becauſe (I was ſtartled at the expreſſion) " they had moſt of " them a *kindneſs* for *Wood*." Yet as thoſe, who had a kindneſs for the univerſity, would probably require a more ſubſtantial reaſon, he hath not hitherto (that I know of) at any public meeting been appointed in form the chief manager; but this place alſo has been kept vacant above a twelvemonth. Out of *kindneſs* however to *Wood*, he hath ever ſince been permitted (by what authority or whoſe orders I am ignorant) to take the ſame care of the printing-houſe as he did in the lifetime of *Richardſon*.

I may, like other gentlemen before me, be accuſed of " more crafty " than fair ſuppreſſions," if I omit to mention one circumſtance, which perhaps is not very material; viz. that ſoon after *Richardſon*'s death, by deſire of the preſent bedell of law, I preſented a memorial from him to the delegates, wherein he put in his claim to ſucceed Mr. *Richardſon*; ſuppoſing him to have been architypographer, and that the ſaid office was annexed to the bedell's place. In both of which points I apprehended, and ſo told him, he was under a miſtake; *Richardſon* having never been architypographer, and the bedell's place being ſtatutably annexed to that office, not that office to the bedell's place. His abilities for the ſtation he deſired were, I believe, unqueſtionable; but that not being in the diſpoſal of the delegates, but of the convocation, this I ſhould ſuppoſe might be the reaſon (ſince no reaſon was given at the time) for entirely ſlighting his memorial.

VI. This ſacrifice of the univerſity preſs to the purpoſes of a favourite family has occaſioned the very inconvenience which our ſtatutes foreſaw, and were therefore ſolicitous to prevent, by appointing an architypographer. " *Uſu enim compertum eſt mechanicos hoſce artifices lucri ſui* " *compendium, cum diſpendio operis, plerumque ſectari.*" I will not weary your patience with raking into the whole of their conduct. I leave it to thoſe, who have employed or corrected the preſs, to complain of the *incivility*, the *delays*, the *negligence*, the *incorrectneſs* of the workmen; and ſhall at preſent confine myſelf only to the article of *expenſe*; which

is

is here amazingly higher than that of the beſt artiſts in other places. The following is a plain example of this, in a work of the moſt common nature, (ſuch, for inſtance, as an octavo ſermon) which may ſerve as a ſpecimen of the whole.

The price of printing per ſheet, number 500, engliſh letter, without notes;

In *London.*	*s.*	*d.*	At the univerſity preſs.	*s.*	*d.*
Compoſitor — —	6	0	Compoſitor — —	10	0
Corrector — —	1	0	Corrector, none found.		
Preſsmen — — —	2	4	Preſsmen — —	3	0
Maſter, for houſe, preſſes, types, ink, utenſils, trouble, and profits	4	8	Warehouſekeeper, for ink, utenſils, and trouble	2	0
			Univerſity, for houſe, preſſes, types, and profits	2	0
Total — —	14	0	Total — —	17	0

From whence it appears, that the cuſtomer pays three ſhillings per ſheet more in *Oxford* than in *London*, and is alſo to find a corrector: —— that the wages of our compoſitor and preſsmen only, without any corrector, amount to juſt as much as the total price in *London*, excluſive alſo of the corrector; from which total price the maſter printer (who finds every thing) gains a competent livelihood for himſelf and family: —— that the warehouſekeeper (who has alſo an annual allowance) receives as much for a few trifling articles, as the univerſity for the only expenſive ones: —— and that, laſtly, if the univerſity ſhould undertake a work at their own expenſe, (or were to lend the uſe of their types and printinghouſe *gratis)* it would coſt more to uſe their own types in their own houſe, than to have the work printed at *London*; for, in the preſent inſtance, the *London* price is only *fourteen* ſhillings, and the univerſity muſt pay their own ſervants *fifteen*, beſides the expenſe of a corrector.

Theſe abuſes and exactions, together with many others, were plainly ſtated in writing, and put into the hands of the late vicechancellor, to be communicated to all the delegates, ſo long ago as *february* 1756; and a ſcheme was at the ſame time propoſed for reducing the preſent prices, and fixing them for the future in all ſizes, letters, and languages, by a ſeries of tables; which tables were ſo calculated that any perſon, without the leaſt previous knowledge of printing, might at one view be able

to

to aſcertain the price he was to give for any work. This propoſal (which coſt ſome pains in the compiling) had undergone the ſtrictures of many perſons of learning in this place, and had been examined, corrected, and approved by ſome printers of the firſt character in *London*. Many alſo of the delegates received it with ſeeming ſatisfaction, and profeſſions of zeal for it's ſucceſs. Others indeed treated it with a gloomy and contemptuous ſilence; imagining perhaps that any ſteps towards reformation would be an acknowlegement of former negligence. Objections of ſome ſort or other they certainly had, and probably extremely ſtrong ones; elſe it will be hard to account why, in the courſe of fifteen months, theſe propoſals have never been once conſidered in any meeting; nor have had any other effect, than barely to alarm the favourite family in the printinghouſe; who, I hear, have begun among themſelves a ſlight and imperfect reduction, which may poſſibly continue till the preſent enquiries are over.

VII. The laſt and moſt important complaint, which I think it my duty to lay before you and the univerſity, relates to the *withholding* of thoſe ample *revenues*, which are appropriated to the maintenance of a learned preſs. I will not go ſo far as to charge (what I cannot prove) any particular miſapplication or embezzlement of this ſacred fund: but, during my knowledge of the univerſity, and by all accounts for theſe forty years paſt, ſo ſmall a proportion has been *viſibly* applied to it's proper uſe, that if it ſtill remains untouched (as I truſt it does) there muſt be ſtock in the cheſt ſufficient to complete the moſt extenſive deſigns of a LAUD, a SHELDON, or a FELL.

As this is a matter of great conſequence, not only to the univerſity but alſo to the learned world, I muſt entreat your patience, while I endeavour to ſtate the fact with ſome degree of minuteneſs.

The *funds*, appropriated to the ſupport and maintenance of a learned preſs, I apprehend to be principally three.

1. The firſt is the rent paid by Mr. *Baſkett*, for the uſe of one half of our printinghouſe in the impreſſion of bibles and liturgies; and alſo in conſideration of the univerſity's forbearing to *comprint* (ſuch is their expreſſion) theſe and certain other books, according to their privilege by charter and immemorial preſcription.

Sir *Edward Coke*, who was educated at *Cambridge*, hath obſerved with ſome triumph [e], that "the univerſity of *Cambridge* hath power to print "within the ſame *omnes et omnimodos libros*, which the univerſity of "*Oxford* hath not." How true this negative branch of the obſervation might have been when he made it, I ſhall not at preſent enquire. But

[e] 4 Inſt. 228.

it

it certainly hath not been true, ever ſince the 12th of *november*, 8 CAROLI I. 1632; when our ever-to-be-honoured chancellor, archbiſhop LAUD, then biſhop of *London*, procured the king's charter of that date, containing moſt ample privileges of printing; which were confirmed, explained, and enlarged by two ſubſequent charters, 13 *mar.* 8 CAR. I. and 3 *mar.* 11 CAR. I. " The motives" (ſays he in his letter to the convocation 22 *mar.* 1632 [f],) " which I uſed were principally two; the " one, that you might enjoy this privilege for learning equally with " *Cambridge*; and the other, that having many excellent manuſcripts in " your library, you might in time hereby be encouraged to publiſh ſome " of them in print, to the great honour of that place, this church, and " kingdom. And now, upon the grant of the like patent, I doubt not " but you will enter into ſome provident conſideration among yourſelves, " how you may ſet the preſs going, and do ſomething worthy of this " his majeſty's favour, and that the world may ſee it is not granted to " you for nothing."

In conſequence of theſe charters, and this letter, the firſt delegacy for printing was appointed, 1 *apr.* 1633; the intention whereof will be beſt underſtood from the words of the delegation itſelf. " *Ne aut indigni* " *tanto beneficio, aut prorſus ingrati videremur, rogavit vicecancellarius,* " *placeretne venerabili coetui ut deſignentur delegati, qui conſilio mature* " *habito rationem ineant, qua ampliſſima iſta privilegia in majorem aca-* " *demiae utilitatem redeant & honorem, qui ſtatuant de ſtipulatione a libro-* " *rum impreſſoribus academiae praeſtanda, de praelo graecis literis deſti-* " *nando, de* CENSU *demum* ANNUO *quo mſs. bibliothecae codices luce publica* " *donentur.—Procuratores nominabant hos egregios viros delegatos ad audi-* " *endum, ſtatuendum, & determinandum de negotio propoſito; impreſſorum* " *ſcilicet, & praeli, et eorum quae ad imprimendum pertinent; viz. &c.*

What this annual *cenſus* was to be, was not fully determined till the year 1636; when the ſtationers' company began to apprehend the ſale of their bibles, grammars, almanacs, &c, would be greatly diminiſhed, ſhould the univerſity reſolve to comprint them in purſuance of their late charters; and therefore offered the univerſity 200*l.* a year, to forbear comprinting theſe and other books, uſually printed for the company of ſtationers. This propoſal the hebdomadal meeting of heads and proctors approved of, and entered into articles with the ſtationers for that purpoſe; a copy of which was tranſmitted to archbiſhop LAUD [g], and he on the 24th of *february* writes thus [h] to the vicechancellor. " Theſe articles I can find

[f] Hiſt. Chanc. 58. [g] Hiſt. Chanc. 124. [h] Hiſt. Chanc. 126.

" no

" no fault with; for certainly it will be more beneficial to the univerſity
" for the advance of a learned preſs to receive 200*l.* a year, than to
" print grammars, and almanacks, &c; and more honour too, when it
" ſhall appear to what extraordinary *good uſe* you turn this money.——
" Now in the mean time I ſhall require this of you and your ſucceſſors,
" that this money which you yearly receive may be kept ſafe, as a ſtock
" apart; and *put to no other uſe than the ſettling of a learned preſs.*
" And I think it were not amiſs, that ſome handſome regiſterbook were
" bought, in which might be kept alone your acts concerning the ſettle-
" ment of the preſs aforeſaid, and in another part of the book all your
" receipts and all your diſburſements. And, if you and the heads like
" this propoſal of mine, I would then have you order it ſo by an act of
" convocation: and I will preſently acquaint the king, what *great good*
" *uſe* we are like to make of the gracious privilege he hath granted, leaſt
" any other man ſhould tell him we have BASELY SOLD it."

In purſuance of this letter, we find this act of convocation, 31 *mar.* 1637. " *Cum rex noſter* CAROLUS *ex regia ſua munificentia per literas*
" *patentes cancellario magiſtris & ſcholaribus univerſitatis* Oxon. *conceſſerit*
" *privilegium & poteſtatem imprimendi ſacra biblia, pſalteria, gramma-*
" *ticas, & omnis generis libros qui ad ornatum reipublicae literariae con-*
" *ducere poſſunt, ſtationarii* Londinenſes *ex eo ſuum commodum perverti ſen-*
" *tiebant. Qui ultro ad dominum* Balie *vicecancellarium & collegii divi*
" Johannis *baptiſtae praeſidem acceſſerunt, humiliter petentes ut exequutio-*
" *nem privilegiorum imprimendi ultimo conceſſorum ſuſpenderemus, eaque*
" *lege ſocietatem ſtationariorum* Londinenſium *annuatim ducentas libras*
" *bonae & legalis monetae* Angliae *in uſum univerſitatis ſoluturam: hocque*
" *ratum & confirmatum fore per indenturas communi ſigillo dictae ſocietatis*
" *ſuae munitas ſtationarii ſe obſtrinxerunt a triennio in triennium. His*
" *poſt maturam deliberationem diſcuſſis, & ad domum convocationis propo-*
" *ſitis, placuit univerſitati ut hinc inde indenturae conficerentur, & com-*
" *muni ſigillo univerſitatis munirentur.——Significavit inſuper vice-*
" *cancellarius has pecuniarum ſummas magno uſui academiae futuras, ſi*
" IN PRAELUM IMPENDERENTUR, *quo libri graeci mſs. arabici & lin-*
" *guarum orientalium ſelectiores imprimerentur, quibus honoratiſſimus noſter*
" *cancellarius locupletiſſime inſtauravit bibliothecam noſtram. Huic curae*
" *deſtinantur delegati antehac nominati, viz. primo die* aprilis 1633; *qui*
" *quotannis rationem redderent huic domui de receptis & expenſis in hunc uſum*
" *erogatis; & ſuper hoc ſolo negotio librum ratiocinii ſervarent, & ciſtam*
" *in qua liber ratiocinii & pecuniae in hunc uſum collatae reponerentur.*"

From

From the whole of theſe extracts it is clear that, *at the time* when this rent was created, it was deſtined and appropriated to the maintenance of a learned preſs; a thing which the chancellor and univerſity ſeem then to have had greatly at heart. And, unleſs the continuation of this rent has *ſince* been expreſsly appropriated by the univerſity to other purpoſes, it ſeems reaſonable to ſuppoſe that it muſt ſtill remain in the ſame chanel; according to the expreſs deſire of the archbiſhop in his letter [i] of the 10th of *april* 1637. " I ſhall hope that your ſucceſſors after you " will keep it in that way into which it is now put, unleſs they can find " a better and more uſeful for the learned preſs." Let us therefore ſee in what manner this agreement was afterwards carried on.

On the 12th of *auguſt*, 1639, the ſame terms were renewed with the ſtationers for three years from the 12th of *february* following, with a covenant for future renewals from three years to three years, ſo long as the parties ſhould pleaſe. But the national calamities, which ſoon followed, put a ſtop to all tranſactions of this ſort; and in the convocation on the 24th of *january*, 1650, it being recited that the ſtationers had long ſince broke through their agreements, power is thereupon given to *Leonard Lichfield* and *Henry Hall*, univerſity printers, to print bibles, grammars, prognoſtications, &c; till the univerſity ſhould deliberate upon and reſolve what further ſhould be done in this matter.

But ſoon after the reſtoration, 23 *jun.* 1662, " *cauſa convocationis* " *erat, ut contractus inter univerſitatem et ſtationarios, a. d.* 1636 *pri-* " *mitus factus, jam tandem ex decreto iſtius venerabilis conventus de novo* " *confirmaretur; et ut indenturae prioribus conſimiles, mutatis neceſſario* " *mutandis, hinc inde conficerentur; ea lege, ut ſtationarii annuatim* " 200 *l. in uſum univerſitatis ſolvant. Placuit univerſitati ut indenturae* " *ſigillo munirentur.*"

Here was an expreſs renewal of the agreement with the ſtationers upon the *original terms* in 1636; and, by fair implication, we might infer that the rent ariſing from thence was deſtined to the ſame *original uſes.* But, not to reſt upon implications merely, we find that in ſix months after, viz. 22 *dec.* 1662, a new delegacy of the preſs was conſtituted; (the ſame that by various ſubſtitutions and ſubjunctions ſubſiſts to this day;) " *ad deliberandum et determinandum cum relatione ad domum* " *convocationis de re typographica; nimirum, qui* PECUNIAS A STATIO- " NARIIS Londinenſibus *nupero conventu debitas,* ALIASQUE SUMMAS " *in eos uſus ſolvendas,* RECIPIANT ET EROGENT; *de loco typographiae*

[i] Hiſt. Chanc. 129.

" *idoneo, aliiſque omnibus in hanc rem facientibus, proſpiciant et tranſigant*;
" *et rationem quotannis reddant de receptis et expenſis quo tempore vicecan-*
" *cellarius computum ſuum fecerit.*"

By this delegation, (which we are bound to regard as inſtructions from our maſters and conſtituents, the venerable houſe of convocation) we are bound to *receive* and *expend* the ſums due from the *ſtationers*, or ſuch as now ſtand in their places, and *all other* ſums deſtined to the uſe of the preſs; and to render an account of ſuch our receipts and expenſes every year, at the ſelf ſame time as the vicechancellor renders his accounts, and of courſe to the ſelf ſame auditors.

This agreement was renewed to the ſtationers' company 22 *dec.* 1664;—and again, 30 *oct.* 1669:—to Sir *Leoline Jenkins*, Sir *Joſeph Williamſon*, Dr. *Yate*, and Dr. *Fell*, 16 *nov.* 1671;—and again to the ſurvivors, 25 *febr.* 1674; 19 *apr.* 1678; 6 *oct.* 1685;—and to biſhop *Fell*'s executors, 26 *apr.* 1688:—to Meſſ. *Iſted*, *Mortlock*, and *Bellinger*, 27 *jan.* 1691:—to Meſſ. *Mortlock*, *Philips*, and *Lownes*, 4 *jun.* 1698:—to Meſſ. *Philips*, *Mortlock*, and *Andrews*, 20 *ſept.* 1703;—and again 1 *jan.* 1708:—to Meſſ. *Williams*, *Baſkett*, and *Aſhurſt*, 2 *jan.* 1711, for twenty one years:—to Meſſ. *Baſkett*, *Aſhurſt*, and *Goſling*, 28 *jun.* 1734:—and, on their ſurrender, to *Thomas Baſkett* only, 28 *ſept.* 1744, for twenty one years from lady-day preceding.

Theſe ſeveral agreements, thus renewed, are expreſsly declared in their preamble to be " for the better maintaining and management of " printing in the univerſity of *Oxford*, and for the diſcharge of the " TRUST in the ſaid univerſity lodged and repoſed, and for improve-" ment of the INTEREST granted to the univerſity by the king's " charters." And therefore I conclude that the rent reſerved on theſe ſeveral renewals muſt neceſſarily be appropriated to the ſame " great " good uſe", and no other, for which that TRUST was lodged and repoſed in the univerſity, and that INTEREST granted by the king's charters; unleſs it can be ſhewn (which I am perſuaded it cannot) that the convocation have diſpoſed of it to *other uſes*, regardleſs of that cenſure which the good archbiſhop was ſo careful to guard againſt, of having " BASELY SOLD the gracious privilege which the king hath granted."

This rent ſtood for many years at 200*l.* has been ſometimes raiſed to 300*l.* and now ſtands, by the preſent leaſe, at 250*l. per annum.*

2. The ſecond fund, appropriated (by the will of the donor) to the ſupport of a learned preſs, is the annual ſurplus ariſing from the eſtates given by archbiſhop SHELDON to the univerſity, after the charges of repairing his theater are firſt deducted.

In

In his latin deed of gift to the univerſity, dated the 25th of *may* 1669, part of the conſideration is, " *ut res typographica, a cujus incrementis* " *bonae literae uberrimos profectus merito ſperaverint, idoneis conclavibus,* " *forulis, et officinis deinceps inſtrueretur; &c.*" And by his letter to the houſe of convocation, accompanying this deed of gift, he informs them, that he had laid by 2000 *l.* in order to a purchaſe of lands for the perpetual repair of the theater, and then adds, " What ſhall every year be " remaining of the rents over and above the charge of repairs, I deſire " may be employed for the beſt advantage and encouragement of the " LEARNED PRESS there deſigned, and already ſet at work; which I " pray God proſper."

With this money was purchaſed an eſtate at *Lechlade* in *Glouceſterſhire*, of the clear annual value of 100 *l.* and the ſavings from this eſtate, whatever they be, (and which I cannot calculate at leſs than 50 *l. per annum* ever ſince I have known the theater) ſhould be applied by the proper delegates to the uſes of a learned preſs. And thus much was expreſsly declared by the convocation when, 16 *oct.* 1688, they ſealed an acquittance to the executors of biſhop FELL, (the original curator of the theater) for ſavings to the amount of 475 *l.* 9*s.* 8*d.* from the *Lechlade* eſtate; " the yearly rents and profits whereof, until ſuch time as there ſhould be " occaſion to repair the ſaid theater, the ſaid archbiſhop did direct and " appoint ſhould be made uſe of and applied in carrying on of the charge " of PRINTING books in the theater in the univerſity aforeſaid."

3. The laſt fund, appropriated to the ſupport and maintenance of the preſs, ariſes from the ſavings of the money annually collected in the univerſity (by virtue of the ſtatute, *tit.* xx. §. 4.) from all perſons taking degrees,—from all that propoſe diſpenſations,—from all determining bachelors,—and from all ſcholars at the time of matriculation. Theſe contributions, the ſtatute informs us, were originally a voluntary and temporary tax, laid on for ſeven years by the convocation, in order to diſcharge the debt contracted by building the public ſchools. They were afterwards continued, as appears by the regiſter, 10 *dec.* 1633, for two years more; during which period the new ſtatutes were promulged and received; which *perpetuate* and *appropriate* this tax in the following words: " *Quoniam tamen ex eo tempore deprehenſum eſt, totam ſcholarum* " *fabricam male materiatam eſſe, ac porro vitium facturam ſubeſt periculum; neque vero ſuſtentandae aut reparandae ſumptuoſae huic moli aliunde* " *quicquam ſuppetit; decretum eſt, has contributiones deinceps in perpetuum duraturas eſſe, in ſuſtentationem fabricae novarum ſcholarum,* " *quoties uſus feret, erogandas. Interim vero, ceſſante hujuſmodi impendii*

 " *occaſione,*

" *occaſione, quicquid eſt hujus proventus (quod univerſitati honorificum*
" *juxta ac utile futurum eſt)* IN INSTRUENDAM ET ALENDAM PUBLICAM
" UNIVERSITATIS TYPOGRAPHIAM *impendatur; ad volumina quam-*
" *plurima, tum graeca tum latina, modo in bibliotheca publica ſepulta*
" *(indigna certe quae cum blattis ac tineis uſque rixentur) aliquando in*
" *lucem protrahenda.*"

Could the meaning of this ſtatute admit of a doubt, it might be cleared and explained by a multitude of concurrent teſtimonies. Thus archbiſhop LAUD [k] writes to his vicechancellor, 8 *ſept.* 1637, in the following terms: " Since the finiſhing of your new library will coſt you a thouſand pounds, " I am heartily glad you have ſeven hundred pounds in cheſt towards it. " I pray therefore acquaint the heads, that I would have this work pre- " ſently begun, (eſpecially conſidering how long it will be in doing) that " ſo the *learned preſs* may really and heartily be ſet upon; which I do " deſire to ſee on foot." You will obſerve that the archbiſhop depends upon the monies that were to ariſe *after* finiſhing the new library, (i. e. the weſtern part) *before* the learned preſs *could be* really and heartily ſet on foot. And this, notwithſtanding the agreement juſt made with the company of ſtationers; on the ſtrength of which only, it appears by the public accounts that there was this very year diſburſed, in the purchaſe of matrices and arabic types, 293 *l.* 11 *s.* 6*d*.

However before this fund had worked itſelf clear, the unhappy deſolation, which overwhelmed the univerſity together with our church and monarchy, put a temporary ſtop, as was before obſerved, to the preſs. But when theſe matters began again to be looked into; when, on the 30th of *june* 1652, the old convocation houſe was ordered to be turned into a printing houſe, and the univerſity types, &c, to be there depoſited; and when, in further conſequence of this reviving ſpirit, a new delegacy of the preſs was appointed, 26 *mar.* 1653; it appears, that about three years afterwards this ſchoolmoney (as it was called) was collected into a ſeparate account for the *firſt* time, in the year 1656; and in that year there were purchaſed from this fund three fonts, of ſaxon, of hebrew, and of arabic letter. And almoſt at the inſtant of the reſtoration, 16 *may* 1660, it is declared in the regiſter, that " by the ſtatutes of the univer- " ſity, the overplus of the money collected for the maintenance and repair " of the ſchooles is to be imployed in ſetting up and maintaining a " LEARNED TYPOGRAPHIE, AND NOE OTHERWAYES;" and therefore the convocation confirm the proceedings of their delegates, in allowing

[k] Hiſt. Chanc. 141.

140*l.*

140*l.* of the ſaid money to Mr. *Pococke* for printing *Abûl Pharagius*, and 100*l.* for *Johannes Malela*. And, finally, theſe ſums ſeem to be what is meant by the "*alias ſummas in eos uſus ſolvendas*" mentioned in the delegation of 1662 above cited.

It appears by the public accounts, that from the year 1656 to 1697 (both incluſive) this collection amounted to 15674*l.* 17*s.* 4*d.* that is, upon an average, rather better than 373*l.* 4*s.* 2*d. per annum.* From the year 1697 to the preſent time no roll of accounts has been ſuffered to appear in the public archives: but we may fairly calculate that this income has been much the ſame as formerly; eſpecially as the money collected for the unendowed lectures, and uſually paid to the proctors, (which ſhews the number of undergraduates and bachelors of arts) has been nearly equivalent in the greater part of both periods. Yet, as the whole of this income is allotted in the *firſt place* for repairs of the ſchools, and the *ſavings* only belong to the preſs, it is hard to aſcertain without proper lights what each on an average may amount to. But to avoid all appearance of over-rating this fund, I will ſuppoſe there has annually been expended in repairs 173*l.* 4*s.* 2*d.* which will leave 200*l. per annum*, clear money, for the uſe of the preſs.

Upon this calculation the revenues of the preſs will appear to be as follows;

Baſkett's annual rent —— —	250*l.*
Savings from the theater eſtates ——	50*l.*
Savings from the ſchoolmoney ——	200*l.*
Total	500*l. per annum.*

Whether theſe have been annually applied to the purpoſes for which they were deſigned, cannot poſitively be aſſerted without inſpecting the accounts of the preſs. But within my own memory, and that of my more experienced friends, there has been no *viſible* application of this money to the uſes of "a learned typographie:" and ſuch an application, if made, could not be long a ſecret. The method adopted, during the adminiſtration of *Richardſon* and his family, having been to drive a little peddling trade, with a ſmall but certain gain; unleſs they were ſo unfortunate as once in twenty years to forfeit all thoſe gains, by adventuring upon and overprinting ſome bulky unſaleable performance. Not that I will ſuſpect any miſapplication of theſe ſums to other purpoſes; being, like the reſt of the univerſity, (the delegates of accounts excepted) an entire ſtranger to the preſent methods of managing the public ſtock. I will rather

rather ſuppoſe, till the contrary ſhall appear, that the income of theſe revenues for forty years paſt (amounting to 20000*l.*) is now ſlumbering in the public cheſt, and ready to be employed in the ſervice of learning, whenever the delegates of the preſs ſhall think that ſervice worth attending to.

If it be enquired, to what uſes of a printinghouſe can ſo ample revenues be applied, the anſwer to this queſtion is not the buſineſs of the writer of theſe papers, nor of any other ſingle perſon. It muſt be the work of calm deliberation, and the reſult of the accumulated wiſdom of a well conſtituted delegacy; re-examined perhaps and approved by that learned public-ſpirited body, the venerable houſe of convocation. But thus much is certain; that to apply them to *any other uſes* would be a very unwarrantable practice. Sums of money, thus ariſing from the privileges of a royal charter, or ſpecially appropriated by the expreſs directions of our great benefactor SHELDON, or, laſtly, raiſed by a voluntary impoſt of our own upon every member of the univerſity, avowedly for this very purpoſe, ought in honour and conſcience to be ſtrictly and properly applied: and the literary world in general, the members of *Oxford* in particular, have an intereſt in ſuch application, and ſhould reap what advantage would attend it. Perhaps, among other ſchemes, it might hereafter be propoſed,—to allow ſome able overſeer an increaſe of ſalary, in lieu of the proportion per ſheet at preſent given; which is in many reſpects inconvenient:——to ſupply the printinghouſe from time to time with the moſt elegant types of all ſizes and languages, from the beſt artiſts at home or abroad; and poſſibly to employ a peculiar founder, or at leaſt a graver of puncheons, under our own direction:——to be conſtantly engaged in the publication of ſome latent manuſcript, or ſcarce and valuable author, with a competent gratuity to an able and learned editor; and to ſell the ſame for little more than the price of the paper, and the workmen's wages:——to undertake at convenient times ſome ſplendid and beautiful editions, for the honour of the *Oxford* preſs; not to be expoſed to ſale, but reſerved as preſents to illuſtrious ſtrangers, and as premiums for ſcholaſtic exerciſes, to kindle emulation in our youth:——and laſtly, to allot one or two preſſes for the uſe of ſuch members of the univerſity, as ſhall be permitted to print thereat by the delegates; paying only the wages of the workmen, and engaging to ſell the ſame at a price to be fixed by thoſe delegates beforehand; the author being allowed a reaſonable profit, in reward of his pains and learning. From theſe looſe hints a ſyſtem might perhaps be formed, which, by enhancing the elegance of printing, would do immediate honour to this ſeat of literature; and, by reducing the price of books, be a laſting

benefaction

benefaction to learning. I own it ſeems to me a very narrow notion, and unworthy the dignity of an univerſity, to conſider the preſs in a mere *trading* light, as an engine for raiſing money. Our royal and munificent patrons had views more noble, and more enlarged, when they armed us with theſe privileges, and endowed us with theſe revenues: views, that were well underſtood, and properly ſeconded, by our wiſe and diſintereſted predeceſſors, when they ſubmitted to a perpetual tax for completing theſe generous deſigns.——But I am inſenſibly wandering from the point in hand; the proſpect of what might be done being far more agreeable than of what is at preſent doing.

Theſe, ſir, appear to me to be the IMMEDIATE cauſes of the melancholy condition of our preſs; the want of *ſtated* meetings, and a proper *regiſter* for buſineſs, among the delegates for printing; the keeping us in *ignorance* of our own *accounts*, and of the *privileges* conferred upon the *Oxford* preſs; the *laying aſide* the ſtatutable office of *architypographer*, and employing a mere *labourer* in his ſtead; and, in conſequence of both, the ſhameful extravagance of our *prices*; and, laſtly, the *withholding* the *revenues* appropriated to the maintenance of a learned preſs. But if we chuſe to go a ſtep higher, and ſearch into the ORIGINAL cauſe of all theſe miſcarriages, I fear it muſt be traced to the gradual and fatal CONSOLIDATION of the delegacy of the preſs with the ſtated delegacy of accounts. For, ſo long as they were kept in any tolerable degree diſtinct, the buſineſs of the preſs was carried on without confuſion; and, as one of theſe ſets of officers formed a conſtant check upon the other, ſhame and emulation (had there been no ſuperiour motives) were ſufficient to deter them from groſs ignorance, or wilful neglect, of their duty.

At the firſt inſtitution of the delegacy for printing, 1 *apr.* 1633, there were no ſtated delegates of accounts ſubſiſting; and when theſe were originally conſtituted, 26 *jul.* 1634, *four* only out of *thirteen*, (*Fell*, *Smith*, *Baylie*, and *Turner*,) were taken from the delegates of the preſs. During this adminiſtration great advances were made towards the eſtabliſhment of a learned imprimerie; till the general calamity of the times overturned the univerſity and it's preſs together.

In the delegation of the 26th of *march*, 1653, (which, however *illegal* in it's date, is by much the beſt modelled of any) not one of the delegates of accounts is named to the care of the preſs.

In that of the 22d of *december*, 1662, *four* out of the *ſeven* named were indeed ſtated delegates of accounts; but then there were *nine* doctors and maſters beſides, in the latter ſtation, who had no concern with the preſs,

preſs, and who formed a ſufficient check upon the other *four*. Theſe delegates found a conſiderable ſtock of types, &c, formerly purchaſed by the univerſity from the appropriated funds; yet the affair of a public preſs ſeems to have been much at a ſtand, for want of a convenient printinghouſe, till the erection of the theater by archbiſhop SHELDON; which was in ſome meaſure owing to the inſtances of Dr. FELL, and intended as much for typographical uſes, as for public ſolemnities. But when this edifice drew near to its completion, in 1668, we find Dr. FELL and his brother delegates extremely buſy in furniſhing and ſetting up the preſs; expending thereon in that and the three following years upwards of 2000*l.* from the public fund, beſides near 1000*l.* more laid out in repairs of the ſchools.

In 1671 Dr. FELL, ſoon after made biſhop of *Oxford*, together with Sir *Leoline Jenkins*, Sir *Joſeph Williamſon*, and Dr. *Yates*, undertook the printing of bibles, &c, at the ſame rent as the ſtationers had before agreed for, but had ſeldom regularly paid. And from that time to 1691, a period of twenty years, the whole management of the preſs ſeems to have devolved on theſe gentlemen, and principally biſhop FELL, the academical ſurvivor, and his executors. This was the period of the greateſt glory that our *Oxford* preſs ever knew; and which eſtabliſhed that fund of reputation upon which it has principally ſubſiſted ever ſince. For this excellent prelate in general greatly reduced the price of books; of bibles, particularly, and teſtaments in ſome inſtances above an half; and annually himſelf publiſhed or reprinted ſome claſſic, or other valuable author, beſides the liberal encouragement he gave to men of genius and induſtry to undertake expenſive impreſſions.

But, as every thing is ſaid to contain within itſelf the principles of it's own diſſolution, ſo perhaps it may be found that the biſhop's ſupereminent abilities have been the remote cauſe of the evils at preſent complained of. For a very long period of years the whole typographical care reſted principally upon his ſhoulders; and ſo equal was he to the burthen, that all others were content to be mere ſpectators and ſilent admirers of his management. So that, though from time to time he was furniſhed with the public money, yet the office of the delegates, as inſpectors of the preſs, ſeems to have been totally ſuſpended. There are only the ſubſtitutions of two delegates, Drs. *Alleſtree* and *Marſhall*, in the compaſs of twenty years; between the finiſhing of the theater in the beginning of 1669, and the death of biſhop FELL in the ſummer of 1688. And it is obſervable, that from the year 1676 the *expenſes* of the preſs have been *intermixed* with the vicechancellor's general accounts, ſo far as they

they appear in the archives, though the ſchoolmoney ſtill continued to be *ſeparately* accounted for. Perhaps the delegates of the preſs, then beginning to conſiſt principally (though not entirely) of ſuch as were delegates of accounts, and finding little or no employment in their typographical character during the life of biſhop FELL, began to conſider themſelves merely as delegates of accounts, and thought it indifferent in what ſhape theſe expenſes were brought to account, provided they were accounted for at all.

About two years after the biſhop's deceaſe, his executors, 4 *nov.* 1690, made over to the univerſity, purſuant to his will, all his materials and ſtock in printing; conſiſting among other things of "puncheons and "matrices for the printing of ſeveral, if not all, tongues and languages." And the delegacy of the preſs being now reduced, by death and ceſſion, to a very few, it was filled up by a new nomination, 22 *apr.* 1691; *ſix* of the *ſeven* delegates then named being previouſly delegates of accounts. Indeed I cannot but preſume (with the proctors of 1755) that theſe offices began now to be confounded together; and therefore in the next nomination, 18 *apr.* 1694, we find the delegates of the preſs, *for the firſt time*, denominated STATED delegates[1]; and the vicechancellor's conſent was thereupon firſt introduced, as neceſſary to their nomination.

We may further obſerve, that the diſtinction between the two delegacies was at that time ſo utterly forgotten, that a nomination to the delegacy of the preſs ſeems to have been underſtood as a nomination alſo to that of accounts: for I cannot find at what other time biſhop *Hough*, who was then made a delegate of the preſs, was conſtituted a delegate of accounts; and yet he appears to have acted in that capacity, and to have ſubſcribed his name (for the firſt time) at the very next vicechancellor's account, 3 *nov.* 1694; and a ſucceſſor is conſtituted, expreſsly in his room as ſuch, 5 *oct.* 1704. Which blending of the two offices together may in ſome meaſure account (if any thing can) for the introduction of that conſent in our regiſters, which has ſince been ſo faithfully copied.

However that may be, from this aera to 1748, we find no perſon admitted to the delegacy of the preſs, but ſuch as had either been previouſly,

[1] Dr. *Huddesford* (pag. x.) has produced an inſtance, wherein he thinks that theſe delegates were called *ſtati*, ſo early as 1643; and, ſuppoſing the fact to be ſo, the proctors have (pag. 20.) given it a ſufficient anſwer. But the truth is, the fact is miſtaken on both ſides. This was indeed a report from the *ſtated* delegates of their tranſactions in five ſeveral buſineſſes, referred to them by the houſe, of which one was the choice of a printer; both *Henry* and *William Hall* having been recommended by the king's letters. But theſe delegates, thus abſolutely called *ſtated*, appear to have been no other than the delegates of ACCOUNTS; for the meeting conſiſted of doctors *Fell*, *Potter*, *Sheldon*, *Walker*, *Stringer*, *Clayton*, *Zouch*, *Law*, *Langton*, and *Langbane*; *all* of whom were delegates of ACCOUNTS, and but *two* of them delegates of the PRESS.

viouſly, or elſe at the ſame time was made, a delegate alſo of accounts; except Dr. *Dunſter*, 13 *apr.* 1698; and Dr. *Dobſon*, his ſucceſſor, 6 *jun.* 1719.

Hitherto there had ſtill been a few delegates of accounts, who had no connection with the preſs: for there were *thirteen* perſons, viz. *nine* doctors and *four* maſters, nominated to this truſt, immediately after the reſtoration, 16 *aug.* 1660. But this number was gradually diminiſhed to *eight*, to which that of the preſs had been encreaſed from its original number of *ſeven*; and in 1719 there ſtill remained one delegate of accounts, Dr. *Carter*, who was not a delegate of the preſs; as there was alſo Dr. *Dobſon* in the liſt for printing, who had nothing to do with the accounts. But, upon Dr. *Charlett*'s death in 1722, thoſe two gentlemen were on the 10th of *december* interchangeably named to ſucceed him; Dr. *Carter* in the delegacy of the preſs, and Dr. *Dobſon* in that of accounts; whereby the two truſts were now totally conſolidated, and ſo continued for eleven ſubſequent nominations, and for upwards of twenty five years, till the 20th of *april* 1748; when, in the room of Dr. *Mather*, Dr. *Conybeare* was appointed delegate of the preſs, and Dr. *Walker* delegate of accounts.

If we compare this hiſtorical deduction with the ſtate of printing in this univerſity, we ſhall find that the ſplendor of the *Oxford* preſs grew gradually fainter as the two delegacies approached nearer together; till upon their entire conjunction in 1722 it ſuffered a total eclipſe, from which it is now labouring to emerge. While the ſpirit and example of a FELL were remembered and in ſome degree copied by an ALDRICH, and others his ſucceſſors in the management of the learned preſs, it's reputation remained unclouded, and it's influence was ſtill extenſively beneficial to the literary world. But, ſince it has been conſidered in no other view than as a branch of the vicechancellor's accounts, give me leave to enquire, what works of erudition have been ſent abroad, or even aſſiſted and encouraged, at the public expenſe? To what typographical uſes have our ample revenues been applied? Has the preſs, or the public, been advantaged by the ſums that are annually raiſed from the privileges of our charters, the bounty of our benefactors, and our voluntary tax upon ourſelves? Does there even exiſt at this hour ſuch a thing as a *learned* preſs, according to the idea that was formerly conceived by LAUD, and latterly exemplified by FELL? Has not the CLARENDON printinghouſe (that monument of our former ſucceſſes) been made the property of a favourite family, and a neſt of impoſing mechanics; while the intereſts of learning have ſo far been forgotten or neglected, that the office of architypographer has

(contrary

(contrary to ſtatute) been laid aſide for ſix and twenty years? Would this have been the caſe, had the care of this department been entruſted to ſeparate hands, accountable (as directed by convocation) to thoſe who have broke in upon their province, and who only account to themſelves? And is it not therefore evident, that the root of all theſe inconveniences is the fatal CONSOLIDATION of theſe two incompatible truſts; which has removed that prudent guard provided by our wiſe predeceſſors, and introduced that glaring abſurdity of making the ſame perſons at once both auditors and accountants?

The proctors of 1755 were thoroughly ſenſible of this miſchief, and therefore determined (like men of prudence and reſolution) ſo far as lay in their power to ſeparate theſe offices for the future; according to the recent example, which had been ſet them in 1748. Upon their firſt attempt, they ſucceeded without much difficulty; having, in the room of Dr. *Iſham*, honoured me with the delegacy of the *preſs*, and Dr. *Huddesford* with that of *accounts*; which qualified him to be afterwards elected *curator* of the theater. But upon their ſecond trial, to name Mr. *Owen* in the room of the biſhop of *Briſtol*, (who was only a delegate of the preſs) they found a negative power exerted in ſo arbitrary a manner, (and indeed with ſo ill a grace) that they were provoked to examine what before was little conſidered, the foundation upon which it was built. The reſult of that enquiry is well known, and it is not my intention to repeat it. I ſhall only ſay, that I am thereby myſelf moſt thoroughly and ſincerely convinced, that the abſolute excluſive nomination of delegates of the preſs (as the ſtatutes *at preſent* ſtand) is veſted in the proctors only. Others perhaps may judge differently, and may have (or at leaſt think they have) good reaſons for ſuch their judgment. In the mean time I cannot but lament that this difference of opinion, in a matter comparatively of little conſequence, ſhould unfortunately obſtruct the reformation of the preſs itſelf; in allowing the neceſſity of which, and in hearty wiſhes for its ſucceſs, I believe every friend to the univerſity will heartily and zealouſly concur.

However, if the right of nomination muſt firſt be decided, (and I fear it is neceſſary it ſhould) it then becomes a queſtion of great importance; not ſo much on it's own account, as for the good or bad conſequences it may produce to the preſs and it's proprietors. You will therefore, ſir, permit me, as a delegate of the preſs, for the ſake of the preſs; as a member of the univerſity, for the ſake of the honour of the univerſity; (from whoſe conduct in this matter the world has much to expect) you will permit me to intreat you, with all becoming deference, to put this

 diſputed

diſputed queſtion in ſome ſpeedy method of accommodation. It is not for *any* man among us, much leſs for me, to preſcribe to the governor of the univerſity; but I hope it will not be liable to that harſh conſtruction, if I venture to ſuggeſt that there ſeem only *three* ways of determining the point among ourſelves at home: the *firſt*, by taking the opinion of convocation upon the ſingle queſtion of right: the *ſecond*, by putting it in ſome method of judicial deciſion, before yourſelf in your *own* court; from which it may be carried, if neceſſary, through the regular ſtages of appeal: the *laſt*, by conſidering it as a doubt ariſing from the ſtatute, or as a caſe omitted by the compilers, and thereupon propoſing a declaratory ſupplemental ſtatute, in the order and forms preſcribed by *tit.* x. *ſect.* 2. §. 2. The two former can only decide what our preſent conſtitution is; the latter may avoid that queſtion, which perhaps would be more agreeable, and may ſupply any defects, or add any proper reſtraints (to the nominating or other powers) which time has diſcovered to be neceſſary.

I lately indeed flattered myſelf that this latter method (which I may venture to call the moſt eligible, as it was agreeable to your own ſentiments) was likely to take effect, by means of the negotiation between you and the junior proctor of laſt year; a gentleman whoſe conduct in that office has merited univerſal eſteem. It had indeed a moſt promiſing aſpect, when undertaken by two magiſtrates, who (however they might differ in opinion upon the queſtion) had each of them nothing in view but the credit and tranquillity of the place. The propoſal to ſacrifice on one ſide the diſputed *negative*, and on the other the diſputed *abſolute nomination*, was equitable and generous in both: for it could not be expected, in any compromiſe, that what was dubious on one ſide ſhould be *given up*, and what was dubious on the other ſhould be *confirmed*. If therefore in the draught for completing this propoſal there were any undeſigned omiſſions, by which a latent negative might have been eſtabliſhed contrary to the intent of the compiler, (and I own myſelf one of thoſe members of convocation who thought there were) I am perſuaded they are ſtill meant to be ſupplied. And altho', through ſome miſunderſtandings with regard to punctilios of *form*, this treaty then failed of it's effect, I aſſure myſelf that in point of *ſubſtance* your ſentiments continue as at firſt; and that at a proper time the *ſelf-actuated wiſdom* of one ſupreme magiſtrate will heal the breaches occaſioned by the *miſguided counſels* of a former.

And if at the ſame time ſome proviſion could be made for remedying a few of the grievances pointed out in the progreſs of this letter; if beſides the right of *nomination*, the *duty* and *powers* of theſe delegates could be

be defined, or rather recognized; if ſome regulation could be made for a *time* and *place* of their meeting, for *regiſtering* their acts, and rendering them properly *authentic*; and, above all, if care could be taken to *ſeparate*, in future nominations, the *two inconſiſtent truſts* of the preſs and of accounts; the delegates muſt be then very deficient to themſelves and their conſtituents, if the CLARENDON printinghouſe does not ſpeedily revive the antient reputation of SHELDON's theater.

I have been, ſir, the more minute in laying open theſe grounds of complaint to you, and the members of convocation, whoſe ſervant I have the honour to be, and to whom ALL delegates are accountable; as well becauſe it has been my lot, (I may add, my duty alſo) to examine theſe matters more narrowly than others have opportunity to do; as alſo becauſe much artifice has been uſed, both in public and in private, to divert the attention of the univerſity from it's proper object, the flagrant abuſes of the preſs; to miſrepreſent the true grounds of the ſteps that have been taken to remove them; and to brand thoſe ſteps as a rebellion of factious ſpirits againſt the legal authority of the heads of houſes,—as the effect of private reſentment againſt one gentleman,—or (at beſt) of private attachment and bigotted friendſhip to another.

The firſt clamour was originally raiſed by a *very few* gentlemen, who labour under a double miſtake; by firſt imagining that the heads of houſes are the repreſentative body of the univerſity; and then by adopting a notion that they themſelves are the repreſentatives of the heads of houſes. And it ſince hath been loudly echoed by ſome, perhaps well-meaning, perſons; but whoſe gratitude to their patrons is ſurely much ſtronger than their judgment. With ſuch it is faction and rebellion for a *hundred* members of convocation to think differently from *half a dozen*, and an utter ſubverſion of all diſcipline and order to deſire the reformation of any meaſure that has been inadvertently purſued; however unreaſonable or unconſtitutional it may appear to their private judgments. For if the ſenior members of the houſe are once in the wrong, we are told it is for their dignity to continue ſo; perſeverance in error is preferable to retraction; and "the remedy much worſe than the diſeaſe" [m].

As

[m] Many gentlemen were lately aſtoniſhed to hear the affair of Mr. *Viner*'s will very publicly alledged as a farther inſtance of this turbulent diſpoſition. But the facts will ſpeak for themſelves; and the perſons, who directed that aſperſion, would do well to recollect a few of them: viz. —That Mr. *Viner* departed this life, 5 *jun.* 1756; and by his will appointed the chancellor, maſters, and ſcholars of this univerſity his executors; directing his effects "to be diſpoſed of and ſold, "and the money ariſing thereby to be applied, "by and with the approbation of a majority of "the members there in convocation to be aſſem-"bled for that purpoſe, on public notice given." —That the will being tranſmitted to the then vicechancellor, but no public notice being taken of

As this accuſation hath been urged with ſeeming ſerioufneſs, it may require a ſerious anſwer. No perſons then have a greater regard for the ſtatutable authority of heads of houſes, or are more ſenſible of the neceſſity of a proper ſubordination in the univerſity, than thoſe gentlemen who have been the moſt active upon this occaſion. They are, for the moſt part, men of ſome ſtanding and experience; and, all of them, ſo far from deſiring to exclude heads of houſes from the management of academical concerns, that they think a due proportion of them in all delegacies would add dignity and weight to their deliberations. Yet they cannot carry their complaiſance to ſuch a length, as to be perſuaded that all ability is confined to any one, however reſpectable, order. And indeed they are convinced, that by far the majority of that rank

of it for ſeveral days, he was waited on by two members of convocation, on or about the 23d of *june*, to deſire him, in the name of themſelves and many others, to communicate the will to the houſe; in order to have delegates named, according to the ſtatutes, to conſider what was proper to be done, ſince the univerſity (being a corporate body) was incapable of acting as executor.——That the vicechancellor repeatedly *promiſed* to lay the will before the houſe the next *friday* or *ſaturday*; and to take their opinion thereupon.——That on *friday* in the afternoon, the 25th of *june*, he accordingly ſummoned a convocation; and, having cauſed the will to be read to a very full aſſembly, he inſtantly diſſolved the houſe, without aſking any opinion or putting any queſtion.—That the ſame evening he gave private directions to have an inſtrument got ready for the public ſeal the *next* morning at nine of the clock, containing an appointment of an attorney (of undoubted reputation) in this place to be *ſyndic* of the univerſity upon this occaſion; that is, one who ſhould be conſtituted (in their ſtead) full, abſolute, and irrevocable adminiſtrator of Mr. *Viner*'s will and effects, amounting to many thouſand pounds; which inſtrument was accordingly prepared, and a convocation held the next morning, the 26th of *june*.——That, this tranſaction being diſcovered by an accident, the convocation was attended by an unuſual number of members; whereupon the inſtrument was not produced, but it was firſt propoſed " to accept Mr. *Viner*'s bene-" faction;" which being unanimouſly agreed to, it was then propoſed, " that a ſyndic be elected " in ſome future convocation;" but that queſtion receiving a general negative, till the matter of it ſhould be previouſly conſidered in a delegacy, the vicechancellor deſired leave to withdraw it, upon a *promiſe* to propoſe it again in a fuller aſſembly; which was granted him.——That in the next convocation, the 30th of *june*, inſtead of repropoſing the former queſtion, he proceeded as if it had been agreed to; declaring it his pleaſure, that the convocation ſhould immediately proceed to the election of a ſyndic, and that by way of ſcrutiny, wherein they were to take an oath to nominate only *one*. And, though endeavours were not wanting to diſſuade him from ſo unconſtitutional a ſtep, he perſiſted and went down to the table; where finding his method of election impracticable, (through the firmneſs of the junior proctor, convinced by what he heard in the houſe) he returned to his chair and ſuddenly diſſolved the convocation.——That, in a day or two after, an agent was ſent by the vicechancellor to a gentleman, who had particularly exerted himſelf in defence of the rights of convocation, with an offer that, if the motion for a delegacy could be dropped, he himſelf ſhould be appointed the ſyndic, or whatever perſon he ſhould pleaſe to name.——That when this laſt effort was rejected with a ſuitable indignation, the vicechancellor at length condeſcended, on the 16th of *july*, to let matters take their regular courſe; and a delegacy was then appointed to conſider what was proper to be done; who, on the 19th, reported their opinion that *five members of convocation* ſhould be appointed ſyndics, with an attorney to be employed *under* them, removeable at their diſcretion; which report was approved by the houſe; and a doctor in each faculty, together with a regent and non-regent maſter, were accordingly appointed; to whom adminiſtration, with the will annexed, was thereupon granted by the ſpiritual court. And they have been ſo aſſiduous in their truſt, that there is reaſon to believe the whole of Mr. *Viner*'s extenſive concerns will ſpeedily be brought to a concluſion.

(in

(in which they can with pleaſure reckon their preſent governor) are above ſuch narrow conceptions; for thoſe who have more ſolid foundations on which to build a ſuperior character, will only value their academical diſtinction, as it gives them a power of being eminently uſeful to the public.

But after all, how comes the authority of the heads of houſes to be drawn into this debate? Have the heads of houſes, in their collective capacity, been the managers of the *Oxford* preſs? It never was charged upon them. Was the *unprecedented* negative on Mr. *Owen* (for it has not it's parallel in our regiſters) the act of the heads of houſes? It was not, it could not be; being a matter quite out of their juriſdiction. If therefore a *very few* gentlemen, who happen to be in that ſtation, will gradually aſſume to themſelves all the *powers*, the *truſts*, the *honors*, and even the *name* of the univerſity; if, when conſtituted the ſervants of the public, they will dictate to [a] their very conſtituents who ſhall, or ſhall not, be appointed their fellowſervants; *theſe individuals* are the aggreſſors; *theſe* make the attack upon our liberties; and *theſe only*, not the heads of houſes, are withſtood by the members of convocation.

As little foundation is there for the notion of private reſentment. The perſons, who have intereſted themſelves the moſt ſtrongly in ſupport of the proctors' nomination, always lived upon amicable terms with the gentleman, who conceived himſelf principally aggrieved by it. If any alteration has of late happened, he himſelf (repeatedly forewarned of the conſequences) muſt alone anſwer for the cauſe of it. And, as to the proctors, whoever reads their narrative, 19 *oct.* 1756, will ſee no tokens of perſonal pique in *their* conduct, but many inſtances of reſpect, and ſome of obligation conferred. But if, inſtead of being contented with *two* offices of truſt, he reſolved himſelf to engroſs them *all*; and, to that end only, exerted at beſt a very dubious negative; let any man judge on whoſe ſide the grounds of the diſpute were *perſonal*.

As for private attachment to the gentleman named, it is indeed no eaſy taſk, for thoſe who have the happineſs of his acquaintance, to be totally unprejudiced in his favour. But yet I am well perſuaded this motive had only it's proper weight. The queſtion was not concerning the *man*, but the *right*; not whether the librarian ſhould be nominated, but whether the proctors had the abſolute power of nomination. And let it be remembered, that the exertion of this power was by no means the principal point in view: but was only introductory and ſubſervient to a nobler purpoſe, the reputation of the *Oxford* preſs; which can never

[a] See the proctors' narrative, pag. 6 and 7.

be

be effectually reſtored, ſo long as that delegacy is conſidered as a *compliment* of courſe, to be tacked as a cuſtomary appendix to the all-graſping delegacy of accounts.

And having thus, ſir, diſcharged what I thought incumbent upon me, in laying before you and the univerſity the lights which my office has afforded me with regard to the preſent condition of their learned preſs, I now take my leave of a ſubject, with which I have no further concern, as a private man, than every other individual that feels for the reputation of the place. If you and the members of convocation ſhould eſteem it not worthy the public regard, I ſhall dutifully acquieſce in judgments much better than my own, and humbly beg pardon for having thought it ſo. Thus far I am certain; that if the preſs itſelf be a matter of indifference, the nomination of perſons to manage it is more indifferent: though if one be an affair of conſequence, the other is by no means a trifle.

Should however the ſpirit of our predeceſſors again revive, and the care of a learned preſs be thought no diſgrace to a ſeat of learning, the compiler of theſe papers will rejoice to become an inſtrument in promoting ſo deſirable a work, by his utmoſt attention and diligence, which is all he can promiſe to contribute. If, on the other hand, his zeal has been judged too importunate, if his preſence may prove an obſtruction to any future ſchemes for the public good, he is ready (by the leave of convocation) to relinquiſh his truſt when called upon, with more pleaſure than he ever accepted it: happy, if by either continuing, or reſigning, he can in any degree promote the honor and peace of an univerſity, to which he has the ſtrongeſt obligations.

I am, ſir, with true reſpect,

Your moſt dutiful and obedient ſervant,

All Souls College:
21 *May*, 1757.

W. BLACKSTONE.

BRITISH MUSEUM